ἈΓΑΠΑΙ ἌΣΠΙΛΑΙ;

THE

Norfolk Feaſt;

A

SERMON,

Preached at St *Dunſtans* in the *Eaſt*, upon the 18th of *July*, 1671. Being the day of the Anniverſary Feaſt for that *County*, for ſome years omitted; but now intended to be continued.

By a Miniſter of that County.

Ut non decet civitatem bene inſtitutam eſſe ſine legibus & Principe: ita nec convivium oportet, ἄναρχον eſſe καὶ ἄνομον. Eraſm.

Ii ſunt qui in dilectionibus veſtris maculati coepulantur ſemet ipſos ad luxum, ad ebrietatem immodicè paſcentes. Aug. de Fide & oper Cap. 25.

LONDON,
Printed by *J. M.* for *Nath. Ranew*, and *Jonath. Robinſon*, at the *Kings Arms* in St. *Paul's* Church Yard, 1671.

To the Stewards of the *Norfolk Feast*, and others my Worthy Friends, and Neighbours of that County.

Gentlemen,

IT was no ſmall admiration to me, that you were pleaſed (at your renewed Feſtival) *to nominate me for the Pulpit; whoſe incapacity for that ſervice, might have cauſed a jealouſie in your invited Gueſts, that you had no great skill in chuſing a* Cook; *who ſhewed ſo little, in the choice of a* Preacher, *And I do much more wonder that your* Requeſts *(which have the force of a command) ſhould call my Notes out of my Study, where they were laid aſide, and by chance not uſed as waſte Paper. The Title Page, I hope, may gratifie your deſires, which declares your* reſolution to a continuance of your Anniverſary Feaſtival: *And if any ſhall look farther; I hope they will account me a* Faithful, *though* unskilful Steward of

the Myſteries of God. *I never was (or I hope, ever ſhall be) one of thoſe Preachers, who ſtudy only to gratifie the curioſity of thoſe Hearers, who moſt highly applaud the Sermons; in which there appears only the* frothy wit of a conceited Preacher; *and nothing of the word of God. I love not to court a Text, as ſome fond Lovers do (with Amorous words) their Silly Miſtreſs; or to ſhew a Curious Art in carving it into little pieces; and Painting every one of them with fine Flouriſhes; as if inſtead of dividing the Word of God aright, and giving to every one his portion; I ſhould cut Sacred, Serious Truths, into Toys, for Children and Fools to play withal. It ſhall never be my practice to help the Devil catch Sinners, by ſcratching their itching Ears, till he lay hold on their Immortal Souls. Had I only preſented you with Witty Alluſions, and Rhetorical Flouriſhes? it had been to ſet before you a* Diſh, finely garniſhed, *and* no Meat in it; *an ill preſident at ſuch a time. My buſineſs was to* commend your Feaſting, *and to* pre-

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vent thoſe extravagancies (*of which I confeſs, I was more afraid, than hurt*) *which are the uſual concomitants of thoſe Feſtivals. Your ſpecial injunction of a very* ſhort Sermon (*upon information that the Pulpit was but borrowed for a little while, and muſt that Forenoon be lent to the* Hampſhire Preacher, *upon the like occaſion*) *muſt excuſe my brevity to the Reader; nor am I to be blam'd, for not* enlarging it for the Preſs; *conſidering my urgent occaſions into* Norfolk, *known to ſome of you; which makes me fear that the* Errata *of the Printer, added to thoſe of the Author, will ſcarcely permit the Reader to gueſs at what I intended; if he doth, let him afford the ſame* Candour, *which I ſeem'd to have from the* Auditors; *and it ſhall not much trouble me, that I did hereby expreſs my ſelf,*

July 24. 1671.

Yours ready at command,

W. S.

THE NORFOLK FEAST;

A

Sermon Preached at St *Dunſtans* in the *Eaſt*, in *London*, the 18th day of *July*, 1671. on the Publick Feſtival for that *County*.

Jude Epiſtle, Ver. xii. *the Former Part.*

Theſe are Spots in your Feaſts of Charity: when they Feaſt with you, Feeding themſelves without fear, &c.

THE Holy Scriptures are not only to be admired, as they declare to us our own *miſery*, and a ſupply through *Gods mercy*; but likewiſe as they give direction to man in every capacity, how to behave himſelf; ſo that his outward concerns may not claſh with his inward; whilſt

our Bodies, like *Dives*, fare ſumptuouſly, our Souls may not be like *Lazarus*, wanting *Crums*. They are not only a rule of *Faith*, but of *Manners*, and are ſo fully directive, that there is no opportunity which God puts into our hands, of doing, or receiving good, but we are furniſhed with inſtructions and admonitions ſutable to the ſame; that as the Apoſtle ſaith, whether *we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do, we may do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

I muſt not build a large Porch to a ſmall Houſe; make a long Preface, being confined to a ſhort Sermon. Let it be ſufficient to tell you, that the greateſt part of this little Epiſtle, is a *Hue* and *Cry*, which the Apoſtle ſends after ſome *Robbers of Chriſtianity*, who had crept into, or amongſt rather, the houſhold of *Faith*; or a *diſcovery*, which the Apoſtle makes of *Impoſtors*, who had inſinuated into the company of thoſe Chriſtians to whom he wrote; ſo that they were not freed from their company,

pany, either in their Religious or Civil Societies; and (which is worſe) they were too ready to give them entertainment, or free admittance; which makes the Apoſtle find great fault with the *Chriſtians*, accounting that they were exceedingly *blame worthy*, for that they might avoid their company if they pleaſed; and that is the reaſon that he runs through a great part of the Old Teſtament, and urgeth inſtances, which might make them afraid to *ſtain their Religion* by evil *practices*; ſuch as they were liable to, if they kept the company of ſuch perſons; much more if they endured the ſight of thoſe *unchriſtian deportments*, whereof they were guilty; and this they did in their Love-feaſts, which the Apoſtle here blameth; *Theſe are Spots in your Feaſts of Charity*, &c. I need not ſpend time in the Explication of terms, σπίλαδες; The word ſignifieth any ſpot or blemiſh, which cauſeth either *deformity* in the body, or *uncomlineſs in the garment*, and ſo it is commonly uſed: The ſame word

Παρὰ τὸ πᾶν ὑλὴν à trahendo signifieth a Rock in the Sea, to which the filthineſs which the Sea contracts, reſorts.

cœnum macula eſt quæ veſtimento inhærens illud deturpet, Zanch.

Σπιλάς *non ſolum eſt glarea; id eſt, terræ ſpecies quæ maculas relinquet ſed etiam concavum ſaxum in littore maris ſeu lavum ac flumina in quam concavitatem, tanquam in commune receptaculum ſordes aquarum confluunt*, Ariſt.

In the words obſerve, 1. A *Commendation* ſuppoſed; They kept their Feaſts of Charity. 2. A *Diſcommendation* expreſſed, There were Spots in their Feaſts; From which words I obſerve two things.

1. Feaſting is *lawful*; the Apoſtle finds no fault with the *Chear*, but only with the *Gueſts*.

2. *Feaſting is dangerous*, for which I have a double ground: 1. From the Gueſts intruding (if not voluntarily entertained) or from their *Deportment*, when they were Feaſting, ἀφόβως *ſine metu & timore*: They neither feared Gods diſpleaſure, nor cared for his love.

I begin with the firſt, *Feaſting is lawful*; had I ſaid commendable, the expreſſion in the Text would have born it out, ἐνδιγμάσιν,

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in the Feaſts of Love; in which you expreſs a love of *complacency*, which you take in the enjoyment of a Chriſtian Society; and by which you take opportunity to ſhew your love of *Pity* to thoſe that are in want, though abſent; both which are Chriſtian Practiſes, highly commendable.

I intend not here to prove the Aſſertion by the Inſtances of thoſe Religious Feaſts which *God commanded*; nor ſhall I need, for there are inſtances enough concerning civil Feaſting, which though not commanded by God, yet are recorded amongſt other commendable practices of good men in Holy Writ for our imitation, or at leaſt to ſecure us, that we ſhall not offend God, unleſs it be accidentally; as we may do in our moſt Religious Services. *Lot* Feaſted the Angels; *Abraham* Feaſted at *the weaning of his Son Iſaac*; *Iſaac* Feaſted *Abimelech* and others; *David* Feaſted *Abner*. Theſe were all good Men, who valued the favour of God above all earthly enjoyments, and were as ready to *Faſt*, as to *Feaſt*,

Gen. 19. 3. & 21. 8. & 26. 30. 2 Sam. 3. 20.

Feaſt, and *as* willing to be in houſes of *Mourning*, as of *Rejoycing*; yet when there was extraordinary occaſion of rejoycing, they did no more omit that, then the other. But why ſhould I mention theſe inſtances; our *Saviour himſelf* was preſent at ſeveral Feaſts; nay, the leading Miracle was at one of them; at which he did not turn *Bread* into *Stones* to diſ-appoint them; by which unlawfulneſs might have been ſuppoſed; but their water into wine, thereby allowing what they did, and encouraging them in it.

More particularly it appears, that Feaſting is lawful.

1. From the bounty of God; from the kindneſs of whoſe Providence we furniſh our Tables with plenty of meat and drink, whoſe are the Cattel upon a thouſand hills, and who giveth us our meat and our drink in their ſeaſon.

1. The bounty of God appears in the aboundance of *the creatures beſtowed* on us, far more, then what are neceſſary for mans

mans ſubſiſtence: Some think that half the Creatures might be ſpared, if God (who made nothing in vain) did not intend man ſhould take delight in the extraordinary uſe of them: *Deus multo plura condidit, quibus carere poſſumus quam quibus neceſſario nobis opus eſt.* Beza. There are ſome of the Creatures might be wholly ſpared from mans neceſſity; they being in their very natures only delightful, and adorning as *Oyl, to make the Face to ſhine*, and wine to chear mans *Heart*. What needs the *Silk Worm* ſpin out its own bowels, working it ſelf to death; when the Sheep can very well ſpare its Fleece from its own back, to make man a covering for his: What need a thouſand (that is an innumerable company of) Hills be covered with Cattel, ready to be driven down to the Slaughter-houſe; when as the Corn and Herbs might preſerve the life of man, (as ſome think) with a more healthful conſtitution. Many impute the long lives of the Fathers before the Flood, to ſuch a kind of

of dyet as one cauſe of them. Wine is not neceſſary, and yet God does not only give it for the uſe of man, but gives it in abundance; That as *Solomon* ſaith, the *preſſes burſt forth with new Wine*, Pro. 3. 10. 'Tis very obſervable, that in the foremention'd place (*Jo.* 2) our Saviour did not only turn the water into wine, but for the quality of it, into that *which was very good*, which they might delight to drink of: So pleaſant it was, that the Ruler of the Feaſt wiſhed he had had it ſooner; and doubtleſs, feared that there was but little of it; but he needed not, for beſides the delightfulneſs of it, as to the quality, there was a very great quantity, *five water-pots containing two or three Firkins a piece.* I might mention to you the abundance of that Proviſion, Lenten fare, which the Sea affords; enough for ought I know to Feaſt all the world: I am ſure it could not but be a very extravagant expreſſion in *Moſes*, and proceeding from his paſſion, (as meek as he was) when he ſaid, *Shall all*

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the Fiſh of the Sea be gathered together to ſuffice them, although there were ſix hundred thouſand footmen, who might probably be very hungry Travellers. Num. 11. 22.

To conclude this particular, if the great provider affords ſuch plenty, we may well think that he intends an extraordinary entertainment; when the great Houſe-keeper lays in *ſo much Proviſion*, we may conclude he intends a Feaſt.

2. Gods bounty does not only appear in the Creature beſtowed, but alſo in the *manner of giving*, which is *with delight and cheerfulneſs*; God doth not only afford us his creatures, but bids us *eat* and *drink abundantly*, how great ſoever our entertainment be, we are welcome to it: He gives liberally, and upbraideth not μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος not telling us of our ſin, of what faults we have been guilty, which would make our meat unpleaſant to us: He that did not grudge us the *Blood* of his *Son*, will not grudge us the *Fruits* of the Earth: He that ſpared not his own Son,

but delivered him up for us all. *How ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things*, Rom. 8.32. χαρίσεται, he gives *gratis*; whatſoever we do cannot pay God for our meat and drink, though we never Feaſted; nor does God expect any thing as a ſatisfaction from us; but whatſoever ſervice and obedience we perform, is requited in another world; we have not only our *Corn*, but our *Money* in our Sacks. I am ſure good men have little reaſon to queſtion this, when they conſider the bounty of God to thoſe that are *wicked*, becauſe they are his *Creatures*, and ſo of his *Houſhold*; we are not to imagine that the worſt of men *ſteal their Riches from God*, or that their ſubſtance is diſpoſed to them by an *unwilling Providence*, but from the free pleaſure of their Creator, who gives them *Portions* in this life, who refuſe *the inheritance of the Saints in light. The Earth is given into the hand of the wicked*; Job 9. 24. And the expreſſion in the Parable of the rich man, *Luke* 16. tells us, that he had

had a lawful propriety in what he enjoyed; *Thou in thy life time hadſt thy good things*; God does not only give but liberally and chearfully, *He is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil*, Luke 6. 35.

2. As Feaſting appears lawful from the bounty of God, the great Feaſt hainer; ſo likewiſe from the good that is occaſioned by it.

1. It is the occaſion of *rejoycing*; and this is no ways offenſive, but acceptable and pleaſing unto God, who hath cauſed all the Creatures to *rejoyce* in the good which they do receive from him. The Beaſts of the field, when they are afforded freſh Paſture, or any extraordinary Proviſion, they do ſome way or other expreſs that they Feaſt and are *Merry*. The pritty Birds have no ſooner filled their Crops, but they ſing the ſeveral notes which their Creator hath appointed them to tune; we obſerve ſome of them riſing from their turff (when filled their bellies but with little ſtones, or ſome ſuch contemptible fare)

ſinging merrily, and ſoaring higher and higher, as if they were going to thank their Maker for a Feaſt. The Earth, when it brings forth its fruit, expreſſeth *mirth and jollity*. The Paſtures are not ſeen in a ſable hue or mourning habit, but appealed with ſuch gorgeous attire, that *Solomon in all his Glory, is* not to be compared to one of the flowers of it, *Math.* 6. 29.

Sic prata viderunt, Virgil.

The Corn Fields are ſeen with a merry countenance, when they grow near unto Harveſt; the Harveſt men may hold their tongues and mind their work. The Fields themſelves make their own Acclamations, and ſing their own Harveſt Songs; *Pſal.* 65. 13. *The little Hills rejoyce on every ſide, The Vallies are covered over with Corn, they ſhout for joy, they alſo ſing*: And if the Servants be ſo merry when they bring in the Proviſion, how may the Maſter rejoyce, for whom it is provided. God will have man to rejoyce in every condition; in his Religious capacity as a ſervant to God: The Apoſtle commands the *Philippians to*

Læta ſeges.

rejoyce

rejoyce in the Lord always, (and then he calls for a ſecond part to the ſame tune) *and again I ſay rejoyce*, Phil 4. 4. When we pray unto God, we muſt not come like *Maleſactors* before a *Judge*, but as *Children* to a *Loving Father*, who delights to give whatſoever is good for them; *Ask in faith*, and *come boldly*, are expreſſions to chear the heart of man, in this piece of his Religious Service. In our Meditations it is not pleaſing to him, that as ſometimes did the *Pſalmiſt*, we ſhould *think of God and be troubled, but that our Meditation of him ſhould be ſweet*, as they were other while to *David*, who could willingly lye awake to ſolace himſelf with the thoughts of him. In *Afflictions* God will not have us *dejected*, but *merry*, accounting his rod as well as his ſtaff a comfort; we may well rejoyce if we are *accounted worthy to ſuffer*. The adorning of our houſes with the richeſt furniture, ſhould not be ſo pleaſing, as *the ſpoiling of our Goods* ſhould be rejoyceing; no Muſick more pleaſant in the ears of

of God, then to hear the *Apoſtles (thoſe birds of Paradiſe) ſinging in their Cages*: No melody on Earth more pleaſant to God, then to hear a Saint ſing *in ſufferings*, or glorying *in tribulations*, Rom. 5. 3. And if it becomes us to be merry, when there is ſeeming cauſe of ſorrow; ſurely it doth not pleaſe God that we ſhould be ſorrowful, when we have an apparent cauſe of rejoycing: If we muſt be merry and joyful when we have nothing but *the bread of Sorrows, and water of affliction*, we may, and ought to rejoyce, when God gives abundance; we may then *eat our bread with a merry heart, and drink our Wine with chearfulneſs*, as thoſe in the Book of *Ezra, Chap. 6. 22.* who kept the Feaſt with *joy*, becauſe the *Lord* had made them joyful.

2. Feaſting is lawful, in that it is the occaſion of *mutual love and Friendſhip*, which is ſo acceptable to God, and ſo beautiful an aſpect void of *Spots*, that the Scripture it ſelf knows not how to expreſs the ſplendour of it; *Behold how good and how pleaſant*

ſant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The ſame word which in the ſingular number ſignifyeth *Love*, in the plural ſignifieth *Feaſts*; to let us know that we do not meet to *eat* and drink, but to expreſs love one to another; or as if meat and drink were meer intruders, and that Feaſting conſiſted in nothing but the multiplication of Love. The Pen-man of the Book of *Job*, deſcribing his happineſs after the large *Inventory* of his goods, gives an account of his comfort in his Children, and that particularly in their mutual love, which was expreſſed by the brothers *Feaſting* in each others houſe, and calling their ſiſters to eat and to drink with them: what their meat and drink was, is not ſet down, nor is there any reaſon why it ſhould. 'Tis enough to ſay they *eat and drink together*; and we may ſuppoſe that they Feaſted with the mutual love and *embraces of brothers and ſiſters.* When *Iſaac* ſaw *Abimelech*, and the two others coming towards him, his heart began to riſe, at the ſight of

Pſa. 133. 1. ἀγάπη.

one

one whom he ſuppoſed to have too little love for him; but after ſome parley, *Iſaac* makes them a Feaſt, which proved a confirmation of the League made between them. Our Feaſting is, or ſhould be ſome reſemblance of future happineſs; we all meeting to enjoy good from God, and to love one another till we come to *Feaſt with our elder brother in his and our Fathers kingdom*, where our Souls ſhall be filled with the Glory of God, as our bellies are now with his good Creatures; where we ſhall drink with him of that wine of joy, which he promiſed us: *I will not drink of the fruit of the Vine, till I drink it new with you in my Fathers Kingdom*, Luke 26. 20.

4. Feaſting is good, as it gives opportunity for acts of Charity to thoſe that are in miſery. I am a ſtranger to the manner of proceedings in theſe *Feſtivals*, having never been either Preacher, hearer, or ſpectator at of any them: But I was lately informed, that there hath been upon the like occaſion, a Collection for the relief of ſome diſtreſſed

ſed Countrymen, a practice very commendable, and very antient too; for it was antiently one of the great deſigns of Chriſtians, in their *Love-Feaſts*: Our Saviour obſerving too great a neglect of this, ſeems to command that none but the poor ſhould be invited: *When thou makeſt a Dinner or a Supper, call not thy Friends, neither thy Kinſmen*, &c. *but call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind*: That which is done to our poor brethren, is done to Chriſt himſelf: Better not Feaſt at all, than that Chriſt ſhould ſay, they Feaſted, but there was not one Morſel *for me, I was Hungry and you fed me not.* 'Twas ſaid of the *Jews*, *Eſt.* 9. ver. 22. that they obſerved *days wherein they reſted from their Enemies, and a month which was turned unto them from ſorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day*, in which they made them *days of Feaſting and Joy, and of ſending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.* There was a Feaſt carried on well, a good occaſion which God had given; *they reſted from their Enemies*; good deportment, *they rejoyced*, and Luke 14. 13. 14.

a good concluſion, they *ſent gifts to the poor*; they were not ſo merry, as to forget thoſe that were ſad; we may drink and forget our own *poverty* & *miſery*, but we muſt not drink ſo, as to forget the *miſeries of others*. 'Twas no ſmall provocation to God, that the Prophet *Amos* mentioneth, *Chap.6. ver.* 4.5,6. where God ſaw men *lye upon Beds of Ivory, and ſtretch out themſelves upon their Couches, and eat Lambs out of the flock, and Calves out of the ſtall. That chant to the ſound of the Viol, and invent to themſelves inſtruments of Muſick. That drink Wine in bowls, and anoint themſelves with chief Ointments, but they are not grieved at the afflictions of* Joſeph; And therefore he reſolveth, *ver.* 7. that *they ſhall be the firſt that go Captive*: They think of their Brethren *laſt* to *help them*; God will think of them *firſt* to *puniſh them.* Let me conclude this particular, with that good advice which *Nehemiah* gave, *Chap.* 8. *ver.* 10. *Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the ſweet, and ſend portions unto them for whom nothing is provided.* This may ſuffice for the Explication of the

firſt

firſt particular, the *lawfulneſs of Feaſting*; but here it will be requiſite, before I paſs it, to remove an Objection or two. *Solomon* calls mirth *madneſs*, and looks upon all the pleaſures we take in the world, to be but *vanity*: He ſhuts the door of the *houſe of Feaſting*, and opens that of *Mourning*. In anſwer to which, we muſt underſtand, that *Solomon* diſcovering the vanity of the Creature, doth tell us, that it is *madneſs* for us to be *merry in the enjoyment of ſuch a ſhadow*: But ſo far as Feaſting gives us opportunity to bleſs God, and to enjoy the ſociety of each other, *Solomon* ſpeaks not againſt it, if he did, we might confute him in his own *Banqueting Houſe*; where we have him Feaſting many days together, (1 *Kings* 8. 65.) And many expreſſions in the ſame Book would contradict each other, *Ecc.* 2. *ver.* 24. *There is nothing better than for a man to eat and drink, and enjoy good in his labour.* But it may rather be objected, that our Saviour in the forementioned place, *Luke* 14. 12, 13. doth ſtrictly forbid the Feaſting of *Friends and*

Relations when thou makeſt a dinner or a ſupper; call not thy Friends, neither thy Kinſmen, nor thy rich Neighbours, leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makeſt a Feaſt call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, &c. In anſwer to which, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we ſhall find, that (not) is not always an abſolute negative, but to be underſtood in a comparative ſenſe; *Non ſimpliciter ſed ſecundum quid, I came not to Baptize, but to Preach the Goſpel, i. e.* Rather to Preach the Goſpel then to Baptize; we muſt not think that *Chriſtianity* doth in the leaſt claſh with *Humanity*: *Qui putant hic ſimpliciter damnari convivia partem humanitatis tollunt ab hominibus: hoc magis abſurdum eſſet quàm auſterum cognatos à menſa hoſpitali excludere, & ſolummodo extraneis dare locum; ſed ita ut pauperes non negligas.* We find our Saviour at ſeveral Feaſts, where probably there were *rich men* entertained, in that of *John* 2. where Chriſt found *wine*. I cannot think that at the Marriage of a Rulers Daughter, there

ſhould

ſhould be none but *poor*, and *lame*, and *blind* to attend the Bride and Bridegroom; nor is it probable that ſuch would ſtrive for *Superiority*; and ſo we ſhould ſuppoſe the former advice to be in vain; ſo that the aſſertion remains undeniable, that *Feaſting is lawful*. I dar'ſt not inſiſt upon thoſe inferences which might be made, by which the *covetous worldling* might be *reproved*, who is ſo far from Feaſting others, that he ſtarves himſelf. And likewiſe the *Auſtere Lives* of the *Popiſh Votaries*, who deny themſelves the lawful uſe of Gods Creatures, which he hath given on purpoſe to be received with Thankſgiving.

But I ſhall not proceed any farther in this, knowing well that our corrupt natures have more need of a curb of reſtraint, than rains of liberty. I hope, when you were pleaſed to invite me to this ſervice, you did not expect that I ſhould ſtrain the ſenſe of Scripture, to the gratifying of a luxurious appetite; that I ſhould be a Prophet of *ſmooth things*, and *deceits*; or that I ſhould invite, or encourage any to your Feaſt,

Feaſt, by *Prophecying of Wine*, and *ſtrong drink*, *Mic.* 2. 11. But that I ſhould be your Monitor, a Prophet to warn you from God, for the prevention of thoſe exorbitancies, whereof we are too apt at ſuch a time to be guilty. That you deſire to imitate the Religious Cuſtoms in former times, 1 *Kings* 8. When the Prieſts took up the Ark before the Congregation, whilſt the Feaſt was preparing; or that the example of the Wiſe man might be our preſident, who firſt *prayed* with great devotion, like a Pious Prieſt, before he *Feaſted* with great preparations, like a Munificent Prince; or that I ſhould write after *Nehemiahs* copy, who devoutly *read the Law of his God, on the day of his Feaſting*, Neh. 8. 18. Give me leave therefore to ſpeak to the ſecond Obſervation, *viz. Feaſting is dangerous*; it muſt not be *without fear*: The company of our Friends and Countrymen, muſt not cauſe us to forget that we are in the *preſence of God*. This needs not damp our mirth in the leaſt; the child may be merry in its fathers company; we may

rejoyce

rejoyce, though it be *with trembling*, Pſal. 2. 11. or as the Common-Prayer Tranſlation, *Rejoyce unto him with reverence*: The Courtier is merry in the preſence of his Prince; and becauſe he is ſo, though he forgets not a due reverence: It is not ſaid that ever *Job* was jealous that his Sons had *ſinned*, but when they were Feaſting. It was at a *Feaſt* that Chriſt was *loſt*, and at *another* that he was *betrayed*.

1. Particularly, Feaſting is *dangerous*, yea very *offenſive*, if it be at an *unſeaſonable time*, that is, when Gods Judgments are in the Land: The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaks of it, as an affront offered to the great and angry God, *Iſa.* 22. 12. *In that day did the Lord call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldneſs, and to girding with ſackcloth. And behold joy and gladneſs, ſlaying of Oxen, and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh, and drinking Wine*, &c. Such an affront, as he reſolves, ſhall not on a ſudden be forgotten by him. That Feaſting ſhould coſt dear indeed, *their iniquity ſhall not be purged away till they dye.* If there were now *Wars* in the Land, we

ſhould

ſhould not then be filling of our bellies; but complaining of our *bowels*, not *merry*, but *pained at the heart*; as the Prophet *Jeremiah* was, becauſe he heard the *ſound of the Trumpet, and the Alarm of War*, Jer. 4. 19. If there were a *Famine* in the Land, it were moſt unchriſtian and unnatural for us to be *Feaſting*, when many thouſands are *ſtarving*: to be faring Sumptuouſly and Deliciouſly, when many a poor *Lazarus* would be glad to cheat the dog of his crums. If a devouring *Plague* were raging, it were a dreadful thing for us to be *ſlaying Oxen*, when God is *killing men*; to be carving our fine diſhes, when God is tearing in pieces, *and none to deliver*; to invent Inſtruments of Muſick, when we ſhould be continually thinking, that we hear the *doleful noiſe of death-bed* groans in every houſe excepting, (where they are all dead) If this great City were *on Fire*, it were horrid wickedneſs for us to be *merry*; when ſo many, on a ſudden, are expoſed to the cruelty of ſuch an irreſiſtable enemy: for us to be drinking Wine, vvhen there vvere more need that

that our heads ſhould be as waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears to quench ſuch a devouring flame; or if it lay ſtill in its ruines, it would not then be ſeemly to be walking (through that which was once a City) in our ranks, to the houſe of Feaſting; but at the firſt ſight of ſuch an amazing heap, to fall down on our faces, and be covered with aſhes, to bear it company. But thanks be to God the caſe is not ſo with us, we have here no rumors of Wars, but are Feaſting, becauſe *God hath given us reſt from our Enemies.* There is no Famine in the Land (unleſs it be of thankfulneſs to God for his abounding bleſſings) There is no *complaining in our ſtreets*, unleſs it be by ſome unthankful monſters of an *inopem copia*; that plenty makes us poor; we are not ſending our Sacks into another Country to fetch Corn; but could afford great quantities to them that want it; we are not buyers, but ſellers; we are Feaſting in a City, which hath no cauſe to complain, either of Wars or Famine, but to rejoyce and be thankful that *Peace* is *within*

her Walls, and plenteouſneſs in her Palaces. Nor is there now a raging Plague, but the continuance of health to admiration. The City ſo repleniſhed, that the ſtreets complain not for want of paſſers by; we have not now a deſtroying Angel, but a preſerving God. Nor is the City flaming, or in its heap of ruines, but rebuilt to the admiration of all Spectators; yea, more then built, in ſome ſenſe, if the computation of thoſe fail not, who think that the coſt already beſtowed, would more then have finiſhed it as it was. How goodly are the new Fabricks! methinks every Houſe calls to the Paſſenger for admiration, to behold how it ſtands upright, like a Giant in Armour of Proof, to defend it ſelf againſt the rage of ſuch an inſulting enemy. It is ſaid in the Book of *Ezra*, that at the re-building of the Temple, the *old Prieſts and Levites* (who had ſeen the former) *wept*, to ſee a *narrower foundation* laid, then was before, I may ſay by the rule of contraries, that had they ſeen a probability of a more magnificent Structure, they would have ſhouted as loud

loud for Joy, as they Wept. This is our caſe, we do not find now that the City is become like a Village, known by a few ſcattering Cottages; but the rebuilt habitations ſeem to contemn thoſe as vile, and inconſiderable, that remain as they were. In which reſpect, I hope, we are not guilty of *unſeaſonable Feaſting*: I know the Nation is not without great complaints, and many do yet feel the ſmart of the fore-mention'd judgments; but God having removed them from us, one day of rejoycing, I hope, will not be offenſive; unleſs we make it ſo by thoſe extravagancies, which men are too often guilty of at ſuch a time; and this brings me to the ſecond.

2. *Feaſting is dangerous*, in that we are at ſuch a time *apt to exceed the bounds of Sobriety and moderation*: Gluttony and drunkenneſs are the uſual concomitants of Feaſting; Theſe are *ſpots* indeed, great *blemiſhes*, for they make men look like Beaſts; the ſame word, which ſignifies *ſpots*, ſignifies, (as before I obſerv'd) *Rocks in the Sea*, becauſe they are the receptacle of that *mire*

and *dirt*, which a troubled Sea caſts up; but to the glutton and drunkard, they may be called *Rocks* in another ſenſe, in that they *ſplit their ſouls and bodies* againſt them.

1. *Gluttony*, a moſt unbecoming and beaſtly vice, when men meet together for nothing but to eat; I ſhould not have ſaid to *eat*, but to *devour*: if the end of Feaſting, be Chriſtian Society, ſuch as theſe may well be ſpared, as very unpleaſant, and unſavory company, who are like thoſe in *Tertullian*, *Tribubus ructantibus aceſſit aer*, They crowd ſo great a quantity of the good creatures into their devouring paunches, that the filthy belchings of their foul ſtomachs annoys the Air, in which more temperate men are only fit to breath. Theſe perſons, may be, would thank God for their Feaſt, but that they have eaten till they have forgotten him; or rather, they have choſen another God, and that their Bellies; however unfit they are for God, I am ſure they are fit for the Devil, and the ſervice of their Luſts; like thoſe in the Propheſie of *Jeremiah*, *Chap.* 5. *ver.* 7. for whom God made

made a Feaſt; *I fed them to the full*; and obſerve what a Metamorphoſis the gluttony of the gueſs made, they ſat down *men*, and they roſe up *horſes*, v. 8. *they were fed horſes, everyone neighed after his neighbors wife.* The truth is, the exceſs of meat and drink gives too much opportunity to men to gluttonize. There is a ſtrange difference between the Feaſting now, and what was in old time: Feaſting was formerly called only the *eating of bread*: When *Lot* Feaſted the Angels, he gave them unleavened bread, or ſome ſay, *Placentas*, Cakes made a little finer, and more pleaſant then ordinary; ſuch entertainment might be thought very mean, for thoſe that came to preſerve him and his family; but there was no fault found with it. *Piſc.*

In the 2 *Sam* 6. 19. It is reckoned amongſt the magnificent acts of *David*, that he *feaſted the people*, and what was their entertainment; a *Cake of bread*, a *good piece of fleſh*, and a *Flagon of Wine*: *Joſephus* ſaith, he gave to every one a *morſel of roaſted meat*, and a *Cake fryed in the pan*: It was nothing in compariſon of our Feaſting; and yet we *Joſ. Am.*

find

find not but that the people departed very well ſatisfyed; leſs meat, and drink, and more thankfulneſs to God, and love amongſt men, would be the beſt Feaſting.

2. *Drunkenneſs* is another, and a more abominable vice than the former, in that it more readily deprives man both of his *God*, his *brethren*, and *himſelf*; and yet ſome, *Nabal* like, cannot be merry, unleſs they be drunken: Feaſting and drunkenneſs were together; and *drunkenneſs* given as a reaſon of his mirth: He held a Feaſt in his houſe, like the Feaſt of a King; and *Nabals heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 36. And when he had done Feaſting, and being drunken, God took away, not the *cloath*, but the *man*: *Nabal* that *Feaſts like a Prince*, and was *drunk as a Beggar*.

This is the Emperour to which great men give place, and it ſtrangely *tyranizeth* over them, inſomuch, that if I did not know my duty better, (conſidering what an offence it is to the great God) I would ask you whether I might be ſo bold as to ſpeak againſt it:

it: 'Tis a vice accompanied with ſo much *impudency*, that there is nothing is the occaſion of more mirth, or renders a Preacher ſo ridiculous, as that he ſhould tell a *Chriſtian* it is not fit he ſhould be a *Beaſt*.

'Tis a vice ſtrangely *Epidemical*, and ſo interwoven with the common concerns of men; as if the trade of the Nation could not be carried on without it; no agreement made, but the parties muſt *drink*, and oftentimes in ſuch *exceſs*, as if to be drunk were part of the bargain: Or as if there were ſome Statute in the Nation, that no bargain ſhould be good in Law, unleſs the Devil were a witneſs to it. However men pleaſe and delight themſelves in this vice, I am ſure the conſequences of it are very ſad. As to *God*, his holy name (who furniſheth our Tables) is rent, and torn by blaſphemous oaths and curſings; they are worſe to him, than the *Angel* was to the *Devil* (*ver.* 9. of this Epiſtle) who would not give ill words, *railing accuſations*. And as to men I may ſay (reſpecting general concerns) it is the *deſtruction of whole Families*. That Country

to

to which we belong, doth too apparently prove the truth of this; a Country which hath been a long time adorned with a *crowd of antient Gentry*; persons of *rare parts* and accomplishments; that are able to give a reason almost for any thing, but their extravagancies, by which some of them have turned their *bags* into *bottles*; their *money* into *wine*; and I am sure that's the way (contrary to our Saviours miracle) to turn their wine into water. What a sad condition doth this vice leave them in, their friend that honoured them, may make the Prophets Lamentation, *they that did feed delicately are desolate, and they that were cloathed in Scarlet, lye upon the Dunghill*; If the vice destroys the body of that person, as well as his estate (which too often happens) what a solitary Widow is there left? one whose Birth, Education, and Fortunes, little thought of such a Devil in the world as Drunkenness, that hath robb'd her, and her Children, not only of a *plentiful estate*, but a *necessary subsistence*: She may now sit solitarily in her closet, and fill those bottles with

with Tears, which her Husband (tumbled into his Grave by Drunkenneſs) lately emptied of Wine. What becomes of the poor Children? they that were called *Maſters* as ſoon as they were born, muſt make haſt, and learn to be Servants till they dye; or elſe they may want *Bread*; or have very little to eat, becauſe their Father had ſo much to *drink*. And this is the *commendable vice* that muſt not be found fault with; if we conſider likewiſe the ill conſequence of it in the time of Feaſting; what an *uproar* it makes amongſt ſober perſons; it doth no ſooner prevail, but is a *diſturbance*, as if the houſe were on fire. In the midſt of *innocent mirth*, the Devil commands his Trumpeter to ſound a challenge, *Bacchus ad arma vocat*, (and unleſs ſome more ſober perſon can tame the beaſt, and perſwade him to be more civil to others, than he is to himſelf) inſtead of meeting like Brethren, Country-men, and Chriſtians; with unfolded arms to embrace each other; we had need, like the *Saxons*, meet in our Armour; inſtead of

being *merry* and *chearful* in the houſe of Feaſting, we muſt be like *Paul* at *Epheſus*, *fighting with Beaſts*. The *Love-Feaſts* were uſually obſerved by Chriſtians, as a *Preparatory* to the Bleſſed Sacrament, ſome ſay in imitation of Heathens, who uſed to Feaſt before their Sacrifices; others becauſe Chriſt inſtituted it after Supper: However, if the vice of gluttony or drunkenneſs prevail; what a ſad Chriſtian Love-Feaſt is that, which is ſo far from preparing us for the Lords Table, that it hath made our own to become a Table of Devils?

3. *Feaſting is dangerous*, as it too much occaſions us to *forget our Duties to God*; *Moſes* ſeemed to be more afraid of this, than ever he was of any thing, *Deut.* 8. 10. 11. When *thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the Lord thy God*, and ver. 11. Beware that thou *forget not the Lord thy God:* 'Tis a ſtrange thing that empty bellies ſhould know how to beg; and full bellies ſhould not know how to thank; That ſcarcity ſhould make them lye

lye *howling upon their beds for Corn*; and when they have eaten, and are full, that plenty ſhould not make them riſe up to return thanks. In the Propheſie of *Jeremiah*, c. 5. v. 7. 8. God was never more abuſed, than when he leaſt deſerved it; had he pulled the meat out of their mouths, they could not have been more baſe, than when he fed them to the full: They then *committed Adultery*, which ſo provoked God, that he ſeems to be at a loſs for a puniſhment ſutable to their wickedneſs; *Shall I not viſit for theſe things?* Queſtions in Scripture, are always of *extraordinary importance*: This may be conſidered, either as an appeal to mans judgment; who can blame my *wrath* if it breaks forth againſt thoſe that abuſe my *love?* or elſe it denotes *Great diſpleaſure*; *Shall I not viſit*; whatever offence I leave unpuniſhed, this *ingratitude* ſhall not eſcape my indignation. And thus I have done with the Second Particular, the *Danger of Feaſting*: I hope you will conſider what I have ſaid, that the firſt may make us *merry in*

the

the house of Feasting; and the second may *keep us from Spots*, in this our Feast of Charity.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. in the Margin, read ὑλὶν, and for *Arist.* r. *Aret.* p. 4. line 15. r. ἀφόβως. p. 9. l. 18. r. ὀνειδίζοντος. p. 12. l. 6. for *appealed* r. apparrelled, p. 15. for *drink*, r. drank, p. 30. read. *viz. Nabal that Feasted*, &c. p. 28. r. *acessit*.

FINIS.